

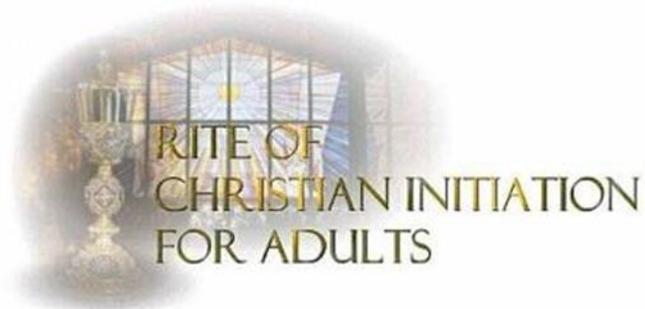


## **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)**

Advent began this past weekend and thus a new liturgical year in the Church. For many parishes, Advent also marks the beginning of the catechumenate of the RCIA. This issue of the Office for Worship monthly newsletter brings you some helpful information regarding the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens. You will also find information regarding Lectionary-based Liturgical Catechesis, which can be used as RCIA Teams Break Open the Word with Catechumens and Candidates.

### ***A Process, Not a Program***

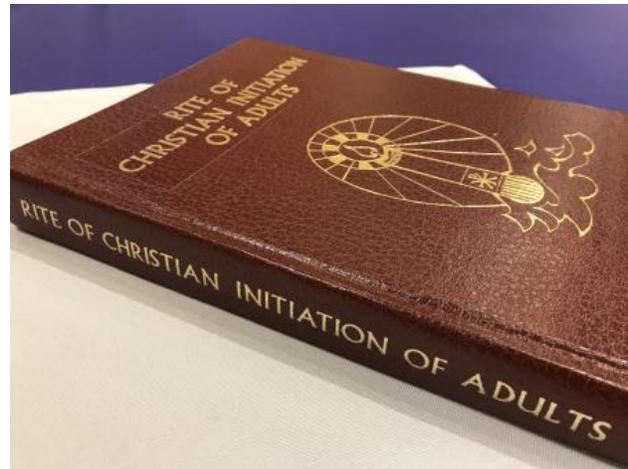
The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is the process established by the universal Church for individuals to become Catholic and receive the Sacraments of Initiation – Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. The goal of this process is to bring people into a relationship with Christ. It is initiation into “the mission of the entire people of God in the Church and in the world.” If we begin with this goal in mind, the RCIA is not a program with a predetermined beginning and ending, but a sacramental formation process that prepares both individuals and communities for a particular way of life. Centered on fostering a deep relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church, this spiritual journey takes place through distinct stages over a period of time that is suitable to bring about a thorough catechesis, significant experience of the parish community, and commitment to the liturgical and moral life of the Catholic faith.



The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is a restoration of the ancient catechumenate, which arose within the first three centuries following the time of the apostles. It was a three-year period of rigorous examination for the purpose of determining whether the profession and the way of life of the candidate was compatible with the Christian moral law. The early Christians were not satisfied merely with knowledge of the faith. Instead, they sought primarily to form a true Christian. For this reason, the length of the catechumenate was of utmost importance as it provided ample opportunity for formation in the Christian way of life.

Because the early church experienced periods of persecution, it was critical that catechesis be comprehensive. Those becoming Christian literally risked their lives for their faith. Yet, the

early Christians demanded little in the way of memory learning. Catechesis instead was closely bound with the liturgy. An active participation in the liturgy was on the whole the most desirable way in which the individual Christian and the Christian community were able to acquire necessary religious knowledge. Easter became the time for Baptism with the prior season of Lent a time to prepare. Regular participation in the Mass of the Catechumens provided instruction on the scripture while celebration with the community provided a witness to the Christian life.



Over the centuries, the catechumenate slowly began to disappear until the Second Vatican Council prescribed the restoration and use of this powerful method of initiation for the universal Church. Today the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is one of the ways the missionary faith of the Church is manifested. It is a continuing journey of personal conversion through immersion in Holy Scripture, authentic preaching, sound catechesis, liturgical participation, spiritual enrichment, and personal prayer. As integral elements of Christian initiation, the liturgical rites are meant to be celebrated in the midst of the parish assembly and according to the norms set forth in the Rite.

### ***Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens / Rite of Welcome***

The Code of Canon Law requires that before an adult can be baptized, one must be admitted to the catechumenate, be led through the stages of initiation, be sufficiently instructed and tested in the Christian life, and be urged to have sorrow for personal sins. It also states that the individual be initiated “into the mystery of salvation and introduced into the life of the faith, the liturgy, the charity of the people of God, and the apostolate.” In other words, once the individual is accepted into the order of catechumens and begins their spiritual journey, they enter into a type of Christian apprenticeship through personal prayer and the liturgy, through the witness of their lives as an apostolate, and through the charity of the community.

This period begins with the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens and/or the Rite of Welcome. The Rite of Acceptance is of utmost importance, and is for the unbaptized. As the title suggests, it includes the First Acceptance of the Gospel and the signing with the cross. It also includes the dismissal of the catechumens.

After the rite of Acceptance, the names of the Catechumens should be inscribed in the Register of Catechumens as having been through the Rite of Acceptance. The Rite of Acceptance is considered a Baptism of desire and thus the catechumen is a member of the household of Christ. As a member of the household, if they should marry before receiving the sacraments of initiation, they are entitled to a Catholic marriage following the appropriate ritual, including the dispensation from disparity of cult. Additionally, if the catechumen should die before they are fully initiated, they may receive a Christian burial.

Baptized, uncatechized candidates ideally move from the inquiry, pre-catechumenate stage to the catechumenate via the optional Rite of Welcome. A combined rite is available when there are both catechumens and candidates ready at the same time.

Several weeks before a parish celebrates the Rite of Acceptance (for catechumens) and/or the Rite of Welcome (for baptized candidates), there should be a brief interview with each inquirer. The certificate of Baptism should be obtained before the Rite of Welcome is celebrated. The purpose of this interview is to discern whether the inquirer is ready to proceed to the next step of the process. Criteria for this interview can be found in the ritual.

The Rite of Acceptance and/or Welcome should be celebrated in the context of Sunday Mass so that the parish can have the opportunity to offer their support and prayers to the catechumens and candidates. Not all inquirers need to be included at the same time. The Rite is celebrated as individuals are ready, and it may be celebrated more than once a year. Children who have reached the age of reason should be included with the Rite appropriately adapted for them.

Many parishes celebrate the Rite of Acceptance/Rite of Welcome on the First Sunday of Advent. While this is not “wrong” or “forbidden,” parishes may want to consider why this date was chosen for this Rite. It’s a busy day in the Church Year—there’s the blessing and lighting of the Advent wreath, the Gloria goes away, and the first couple of weeks of readings are not necessarily the most “welcoming” readings in all of scripture with the apocalyptic theme. Also, what “unspoken” messages does celebrating the Rite on this Sunday suggest? That RCIA begins in Advent and ends at Easter—a “school year” mentality? What if your parish has an inquirer that shows up in January? Does that person wait until the following Advent to begin the process? Does Advent until Easter give catechumens and candidates enough time to fully embrace the faith and be formed in the way of the Gospel and the community?

This article may raise a lot of questions and open up discussions in your parish community about when it the “right” time do celebrate the Rite of Acceptance. Any questions can be directed to Kim Mandelkow, Director for the Office for Worship at (414) 769-3349 or [mandelkowk@archmil.org](mailto:mandelkowk@archmil.org).



## **Youth Liturgical Leadership Conference to be held in Summer 2019**

“One Bread, One Cup” is a five-day liturgical leadership conference focusing on the Word, Sacrament and Mission of the Roman Catholic Church for high school youth and their campus and youth ministers. Conferences focus on community building, leadership development, catechesis, liturgical and spiritual formation, and theological reflection.

Since its inception more than 20 years ago at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in Saint Meinrad, Indiana, “One Bread, One Cup” has become a well-known program for youth, which offers a lasting opportunity for faith formation. It is a tool that can be used, long after the conference days are over, to enter more deeply into every liturgy, every prayer, and every encounter with God. Throughout the conference week, there are opportunities for personal prayer and contemplation, liturgical prayer, charity and action, and vocational discernment while living and actively participating in an intentional Christian community.



*Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, Saint Meinrad, IN*

At the “One Bread, One Cup” conferences, youth and adults discover the Church’s treasures of Word, Sacrament and Mission and enjoy opportunities for fellowship and fun through team building, outdoor recreation, a variety show and a dance. Participants come to appreciate the Benedictine balance of prayer, work and recreation. Each participant chooses an area of liturgical formation to focus on during the conference. Those areas include liturgical music, liturgical arts, extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, prayer in the life of the Body of Christ, preaching for the Liturgy of the Hours, proclamation of the Word, master of ceremonies/server/sacristan, and hospitality and stewardship.

In 2017, Saint Meinrad Archabbey and School of Theology in Saint Meinrad, Indiana partnered with Conception Abbey and Seminary in Conception, Missouri to offer additional conferences so more youth could attend. Rev. Brendan Moss, OSB a monk of Saint Meinrad, who is currently serving as President-Rector of Conception Seminary, encouraged the idea:

“Year after year, teens come to One Bread, One Cup (OBOC) from all over the United States and gain skills, knowledge and habits necessary to achieve the ‘full, conscious, and active participation’ in the Mass and all liturgy, as envisioned by the Second Vatican Council. The central shift that all who participate in OBOC make is from observation to participation – and young people engaging fully, consciously, and actively in liturgy makes a pastor’s heart leap for joy! Saint Meinrad’s partnership with Conception allows for more youth to participate,” said Moss.

Director of the Office for Worship in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Kim Mandelkow is an alum of Saint Meinrad School of Theology and has experienced “One Bread, One Cup.”

“This is a great program that forms youth to serve in liturgical ministries in their parishes. Joel, a youth attendee of OBOC from a previous parish where I served as liturgist and music director is now a Director of Music Ministry in a large, suburban parish in Louisville, Kentucky.

I couldn't be more proud of the tremendous work he's doing there! Not only is he a fantastic music minister, he's also inspiring other young people to get involved in their parish liturgies."

"Another young man, Kyle, from a rural parish in Iowa, has attended OBOC three years in a row and is currently applying to seminary. He'll make a fantastic minister and priest," Mandelkow commented.

The faculty who lead the conferences over the years have included composers and artists like Steve Angrisano, Robert Feduccia, Janét Sullivan-Whitaker, Sarah Hart and Tom Booth, as well as the monks from the respective religious communities. Our own Kim Mandelkow will teach cantor formation at this year's conference at Conception Abbey.



*Conception Abbey and Seminary, Conception, Missouri*

**The Summer 2019 Schedule is as follows:**

**June 17-21** at Saint Meinrad Archabbey & School of Theology in Saint Meinrad, Indiana.

**June 28-July 2** at Saint Meinrad

**July 6-10** at Saint Meinrad

**July 15-19, 2019** at Conception Abbey & Seminary in Conception, Missouri.

If your parish wants to encourage youth participation in the liturgy, this is a wonderful opportunity to have them formed in a supportive and encouraging environment. For more information, contact Kim Mandelkow at (414) 769-3349 or [mandelkowk@archmil.org](mailto:mandelkowk@archmil.org).

Detailed information regarding the conferences can be found at:

<http://www.saintmeinrad.edu/youth/summer-conferences/>

**RICH IN MERCY, GREAT IN LOVE:**  
**An Advent Reconciliation Liturgy**  
**for the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee**

**INTRODUCTORY RITES**

**HYMN**

**Suggestions:**

*God of All People* (D. Haas—GIA)

*Comfort, Comfort, O My People* (Public Domain)

*The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns*/tune: MORNING SONG (Public Domain)

*(or some another suitable hymn)*

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**GREETING**

**Priest:** Grace, mercy, and peace be with you  
from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

**All:** And with your spirit.

**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

**Priest:** Brothers and Sisters,

We gather here this day [night] because we are conscious of our sinfulness.

We also gather here because we are confident that our God is a merciful God,  
who has given us the sacrament of Reconciliation in order that we might experience  
God's mercy through the ministry of the Church.

This year, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee celebrates the 175<sup>th</sup> year since our founding  
in 1843. Over the course of the next year, we are invited to contemplate the fidelity  
of God's abundant love and mercy throughout our history. Through times of war and  
peace, growth and vitality, struggle and home, God has been rich in mercy and great  
in love.

During this Advent season, we prepare to celebrate Christ's coming to earth and we  
anticipate the time when Christ will come again in glory. Therefore, let us reflect  
more deeply on Christ's presence here in our midst so that we may bring God's  
message of mercy and reconciliation to a world in great need.

So let us pray...*(silence)*

## OPENING PRAYER

**Priest:** Loving and Merciful Lord,  
hear the prayers of those who call on you  
and forgive the sins of those who confess to you,  
granting us in your abundant compassion both pardon and peace.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**All: Amen.**

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## LITURGY OF THE WORD

### FIRST READING

**Ephesians 2:4-10**

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians.

Brothers and Sisters:

God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love which he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast. For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works, that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

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### RESPONSORIAL PSALM

*Psalm 33: Let Your Mercy Be on Us / Señor, Que Tu Misericordia* (M. Haugen—GIA)

*Psalm 33: Blessed the People* (R. Debruyne—OCP)

*Psalm 33: The Lord Fills the Earth with His Love* (P. Inwood—OCP)

*Psalm 103: The Lord is Kind and Merciful* (M. Haugen—GIA)

*Psalm 103: The Lord is Kind and Merciful / El Señor Es Compasivo* (T. Alonso—GIA)

*Psalm 103: The Lord is Kind and Merciful* (R. Manalo—OCP)

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## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

### GOSPEL

John 15:9-14

The Lord be with you.

**And with your spirit.**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said to his disciples:

“As the Father loves me, so I also love you.

Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my life, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love.

“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

The Gospel of the Lord

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

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### HOMILY

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## RITE OF RECONCILIATION

### EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

*(based on Misericordiae Vultus, from Pope Francis in the Jubilee Year of Mercy)*

**Priest:** My dear friends,  
as we prepare to welcome Christ in our midst,  
let us pause to reflect upon how we have shown love and mercy to our brothers and sisters.

*Let us kneel* as we recall St. Paul’s words from his letter to the Ephesians: God is rich in mercy and great in love.

*A Kyrie Eleison refrain is sung.*

Reader 1: God's mercy breaks through the dimension of space and time,  
inserting everything into the eternal mystery of love.  
it is as if to say that not only in history,  
but for all eternity,  
we will always be under the merciful gaze of the Father. (pause)

Reader 2: Have I avoided the love of God, neglecting prayer and worship? (pause)

Have I listened for God's voice, looking for signs of God's mercy and  
action in the persons and circumstances around me? (pause)

Have I trusted in the mercy of God, or have I let my own unworthiness  
stand in the way of hope? (pause)

And so we pray...*Kyrie Eleison...*

Reader 1: With our eyes fixed on Jesus and his merciful gaze,  
we experience the Love of the Most Holy Trinity.  
The mission Jesus received from the Father  
was that of revealing the mystery of divine love in its fullness. (pause)

Reader 2: Is my image of God in harmony with the way Jesus describes God?  
(pause)

Am I open to the mercy of God in my life? (pause)

Am I willing to let go of all my preconceived notions of God and let  
God transform my mind and heart? (pause)

And so we pray...*Kyrie Eleison...*

Reader 1: When faced with sin, God responds with the fullness of mercy. Mercy  
will always be greater than any sin, and no one can place limits on the  
love of God who is ever ready to forgive. (pause)

Reader 2: What stands in the way of my responding fully to the mercy of God in  
my life? (pause)

What circumstances in my life are most difficult for me right now? Can I let God's mercy into these difficulties? (pause)

Am I allowing God's merciful love to reach out to others through me? (pause)

And so we pray...*Kyrie Eleison...*

**Priest:** Let us reflect on the areas in our own lives in need of forgiveness so that we can bring them to God's sacrament of mercy.  
(longer period of silence)

And so we pray...*Kyrie Eleison...*

## **GENERAL CONFESSION OF SINS**

**Priest:** Our God is a God of mercy,  
slow to anger and abounding in love.  
Like the Father who welcomes us home,  
or the mother who kisses away our wounds,  
our God is ready to forgive.

Therefore, with trust in his goodness, let us stand,  
join hands and together confess our sin.

**I confess to almighty God  
and to you, my brothers and sisters,  
that I have greatly sinned,  
in my thoughts and in my words,  
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,  
through my fault, through my fault,  
through my most grievous fault;  
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,  
all the Angels and Saints,  
and you, my brothers and sisters,  
to pray for me to the Lord our God.**

**Priest:** Now, in obedience to Christ himself,  
we join in prayer to the Father, asking him to forgive us as we forgive others.

**Our Father...**

**Priest:** Almighty and eternal God  
you sent your only-begotten Son  
to reconcile the world to yourself.  
Lift from our hearts the oppressive gloom of sin,  
so that we may celebrate the approaching  
dawn of Christ's birth with fitting joy.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

### **INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION OF SIN & ABSOLUTION**

*The priest or another minister instructs the assembly where the confessors will be located. A brief word regarding the manner of confession may be given. If there is to be a common ending, the assembly should be advised to remain in church for the Proclamation of Praise and Concluding Rite. If there is no common ending, the **Concluding Rite** precedes Individual Confession and Absolution.*

### **PROCLAMATION OF PRAISE** *(or a suitable song may be song)*

*After individual confession has concluded, the liturgy continues.*

**Priest:** Let us pray...*(silence)*

Lord God,  
Creator and Ruler of your kingdom of light,  
in your great love for this world  
you gave up your only Son for our salvation.  
His cross has redeemed us,  
his death has given us life,  
and his resurrection has raised us to glory.

Through Christ we ask you to be always present among us.  
Teach us to be reverent in the presence of your glory;  
fill our hearts with faith, our days with good works, and our lives with love.

May your truth be on our lips and your wisdom in our actions,  
that we may receive the reward of eternal life.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

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## CONCLUDING RITE

### Blessing

**Priest:** May the Father bless us for we are God's children, born to eternal life.

**All: Amen.**

**Priest:** May the Son show us his saving power, for he died and rose for us.

**All: Amen.**

**Priest:** May the Spirit give us his gift of holiness and lead us by the right path, for he dwells in our hearts.

**All: Amen.**

**Priest:** The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### *SOME IDEAS FOR PENANCES (based on the Corporal Works of Mercy)*

Feed the Hungry; Give Drink to the Thirsty

- Donate food to a food pantry
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen
- Prepare a meal for a family during their time of need

Clothe the Naked

- Go through your drawers and closets and find good-condition clothes to donate to St. Vincent de Paul, the Salvation Army or Good Will
- Reach out to neighbors that have lost their possessions in fires, floods, or other natural disasters
- Donate clothing and shoes to our twin parish in Haiti

Visit the Sick

- Cook and deliver a meal to a sick, elderly or homebound relative or friend
- Volunteer to drive a sick relative or neighbor to a medical appointment
- Spend quality time with someone who is homebound or in a nursing home

Shelter the Homeless

- Donate blankets to a homeless shelter
- Assist with cooking a meal at a homeless shelter

- Save your coin change into a jar and donate it to a charity that tends to the needs of the poor and homeless

#### Visit the Imprisoned

- Donate books to a jail library
- Pray for the families of people in jail
- Guard against racism, practice inclusion—not exclusion, and be mindful that all are members of the human race and equal in God's eyes

#### Bury the Dead

- Visit a cemetery & place flowers on a grave that has none
- Assist with a bereavement luncheon or minister at a funeral
- Spend time with widows and widowers